

HANDBOOK FOR PARENTS OF INFORMATION AND STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT ELL
STUDENTS

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Abstract

The involvement of parents in the educational process of English language learners has allowed ESL teachers and schools in general to create new opportunities to promote the effective educational development of new language skills for students. Parent involvement is a fundamental pillar for students as it provides extra support, encourages active participation, and has a positive impact. The transition of the educational environment for students in the company of their parents creates greater ease in adaptation. However, everything is new for students, it is also for parents, that is why schools should seek and think of ideas on how to guide parents to learn how to help and be part of the perfect trinomial of education that includes students, teachers, and parents. With the support of this handbook, parents will get a better overview, of strategies to support their children at home, meet the school staff and understand the role of each one of them, and discover the community to which they now belong.

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my family in Honduras. Without their love and support I would have been unable to complete this thesis.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The elementary school stage should be a process full of learning, smiles, and good memories for all children, but unfortunately this is not so for all due to different circumstances. In the case of newcomers to the country, this stage can become very complex and full of obstacles that make it impossible for these children to succeed in their educational lives. The search of these families for a better life can become a nightmare for the youngest in school life who arrive at these schools that often are not ready to receive them and give them the necessary tools. The biggest barrier is the language, with the support of the English as a second language (ESL) teachers they will be able to develop their ability to learn the language spoken here (i.e., English). However, at a young age, children need a lot of involvement from their parents to achieve that extra and personalized support that helps them do well in school. However, parents also face many obstacles to be a support for their children and the most recurrent are language and time because they have to work long hours because they are the pillar of their families, which are often very numerous.

Nevertheless, although families face many difficulties, school-age children cannot be neglected. Parental involvement in children's schooling is necessary to enhance students' academic achievement (Doi et al., 2020; Wang & Sheikh-Khalil, 2014). This thesis project was created focusing and thinking about ELL students, immigrants from Latin America, of whom there are many students and there are more newcomers every day. The number of students in America who do not speak English at home is growing (Cosentino De Cohen & Clewell, 2007). These families survive to a generalized system, with the same standards at the state level without

taking into consideration the contexts of each school, in which the reality of homes and schools that, although they are a few miles away from each other, do not resemble and with which there is an abysmal contrast. In a generalized system in which minorities are the most affected and their futures are at stake, it is necessary to raise our voices for our students and give them the tools to help them succeed. The reality of each home in all parts of the country can vary, but studies have shown that parents of students who are ELLs are very absent, and this negatively affects the learning process for our students. When parents are involved and supportive, better results are achieved, holding students, teachers, and parents accountable. When the perfect trinomial of involvement and mutual support among parents, students, and teachers is fulfilled, the results are very positive and satisfactory.

Thus, this handbook is a great tool that provides help for parents and students. From academic support strategies to general information that is useful as to who to look for in the school or in the community to obtain the necessary information to support students. This is very supportive, especially for newcomers to the country, people who do not speak the English language, and make them think that they are incapable of getting involved in the academic development of their children. This is an academic support guide for parents to get involved and be active and participatory members of their children's teaching-learning process.

In addition, this project is a great tool for the whole Latino community and all teachers who face this reality every day and want a positive change in their classrooms. Creating a bond with parents and getting them involved in their children's learning is key. I am a firm believer that when you want, you can, and I am sure that all parents who decide to be active members in the school achieve it, and it is positive support that directly influences the academic performance of their daughter or son.

Moreover, from my experience interacting with families and as an immigrant, I have been able to realize that language is a great barrier and they feel very comfortable expressing themselves when they meet people who speak the same language. As a teacher in language teaching (Spanish and English), I have been able to interact and understand the difficulties that these families face and it is my desire to help with this project. Through research, I can include resources that I know are very helpful in the teaching-learning process, such as games, techniques to develop and enhance learning at home with readings and exercises from the needs of each one. Also, I know their community, a little more and realize that they have many members, willing to help them establish themselves and be part of it that has opened its doors to them and can develop a sense of belonging.

Additionally, today that technology has become involved in almost every aspect of our lives, with the potential to radically change the way we do learning in everyday life. This provides us with the necessary support to give parents what is required to be the main actors in this entire process. Many times, it is the lack of information and knowledge of where to find this support that influences the lack of or little help that parents can provide. To support student success, educational leaders need to devise a system that promotes effective partnerships involving all parents, the community, teachers, and school administrators (Durisic & Bunijevac, 2017; Rapp & Duncan, 2012). This is a topic that puzzles me because it is this type of community that I have served in recent years, and they have shown me that learning can happen positively, even with few resources, but with the desire to get ahead and achieve all the goals set in the life of each of our students.

Finally, technology is key and very helpful in this project, to provide personalized support with a series of educational resources such as web pages, digital tools, platforms, games,

and general information that guide parents and students in the process of adapting to a new community and the teaching-learning process. This project is important because by getting parents involved and taking responsibility in the process, better results will be obtained at the school, community, and even national-level. The burden on teachers is lightened a bit in this type of context and even better for our students who are more responsible by following the example of their parents and the direct beneficiaries of this is themselves, ensuring educational success.

Chapter 2: Literary Review

Research has suggested that parental involvement in a child's education benefits the entire school community (Gettinger & Guetschow, 1998). Additionally, some positive factors were related to the parental involvement such as, increases in children's achievement test scores and grades, higher school attendance rates, lower dropout' rates, and improvement in student motivation, attitude, classroom behavior, and self-esteem (Gettinger & Guetschow, 1998). Furthermore, researchers have suggested that children's sociocultural interactions go a long way in determining a child's literacy development within the dual contexts of school and home whether in a first or a second language (Barton & Hamilton, 1998; Bronfenbrenner, 1995; Street, 2003; Vygotsky, 1978; Walqui, 2006; Tan & Faraishaiyan, 2012). In the same way, teachers need to become aware of basic features of the home culture, such as religious beliefs and customs, food preferences and restrictions, and roles and responsibilities of children and adults (Ovando et al., 2012; Saville-Troike, 1978).

In this chapter, I will convey research related to parental involvement in education. I first provide information related to the successful parental engagement and the importance of this in education to support their children in the second language acquisition and discuss some studies that demonstrate its benefits in learning ESL. I then provide information on the sociocultural perspective on language learning and the challenges faced by newcomers to the country. Also, I will discuss the barriers to involvement of parents. Finally, I will discuss the challenges that teachers may encounter when trying to integrate parental involvement and how they themselves can be supportive for ESL students by learning more about the community they serve, the cultural variety, and customs.

Successful Parental Engagement

Successful strategies for building bridges for low-income parents include setting clear goals to develop school-family partnerships, expanding services to children and families to include health services, social services, and family support, celebrating cultural differences, and teaching the parents (Kreider & Lopez, 1999). Additionally, family support services are designed to relieve stress on parents, and these services are deemed educationally beneficial because what happens before and after school--in the home, neighborhood, and community- affects a child's learning (Flaxman & Inger, 1992). Parent education classes targeted at Hispanic parents should include instruction regarding developmentally appropriate methods of disciplining their children. In addition, educators should be aware that Hispanic parents value social support and need to develop alternate support systems because their extended families are often in their country of origin (Jacobson et al., 1998). Pape (1999) also suggested parent meetings may be viewed by them as a new and important social support. Additionally, school leaders should schedule personal or telephone meetings on weekends, early mornings, or evenings to facilitate two-way communication with working parents.

However, parents who are involved in school activities, such as attending parent-teacher conferences, monitoring their children's progress, and helping with homework are more likely to have children performing well academically (Bogensneider, 1997). Moreover, multiple studies have specifically highlighted the fact that Mexican immigrant parents place a high value on education and are strongly motivated to support their children's success in U.S. schools (Delgado-Gaitán, 1992; González et al., 1993; López, 2001; Valdés, 1996). Furthermore, activities that have been considered to represent parent involvement (Hill & Tyson, 2009) include involvement at school (e.g., parent-teacher communication, attending school events, and

volunteering at school), involvement at home (e.g., structured homework time and educational opportunities, monitoring schoolwork and academic progress), and academic socialization (e.g., communicating parents' expectations regarding schoolwork, encouraging educational and career goals, and preparation for future goals).

The Importance of Parental Involvement

Parental involvement is believed to support many dimensions of student achievement, such as helping children earn higher grades and tests scores, improve school attendance, increase graduation rates, and foster positive attitudes about school (Epstein, 2001; Fuller & Olsen, 1998; Henderson & Mapp, 2002). Moreover, Krahn and Taylor (2005) suggested that immigrants highly value the education of their children. However, not all newcomer parents possess the knowledge about the school system and are engaged with their children's teachers, the school or other parents in typical ways expected in Western settings (Kanu, 2008; Guo, 2006). Multiple studies have shown that immigrant families' involvement in their children's academic life is a powerful predictor of academic achievement and social development as children progress from kindergarten through high school and higher education (Bang, 2011; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Turney & Kao, 2009). Moreover, Turney and Kao (2009) noted that parental involvement is linked to academic or behavioral success and is vital in determining their children's early educational experiences.

Parental involvement plays an important role in students' education, and the advantages of it for students are numerous (Jeynes, 2003, 2007). For instance, parental involvement has a positive influence on the students' academic success (Fan & Chen, 2001; Jeynes, 2003; Jordan et al., 2001; Gonzalez-Pienda et al., 2002; Henderson & Mapp, 2002). Particularly, parental involvement has more effect on students' test scores than GPA (grade point average) (Jeynes,

2003). Shaver and Walls (1998) suggested that students with high levels of parental involvement are better in reading and math than those with a low level of parental involvement. Furthermore, Gonzalez-Peinda et al. (2002) identified that parental involvement is a positive contribution to students' academic achievement by affecting their academic self-concept, which is of considerable importance in academic success. In addition, Hara and Burke (1998) claimed that the key to improvement of children's academic accomplishment is boosted parental involvement. In contrast, Bobbett et al. (1995) found that the effect parental involvement has on students' academic achievement is not significant. Some researchers have even identified that when parents get involved with students' homework and communicate with school, it negatively affects the students' academic success by decreasing their test scores (Izzo et al., 1999; Shumow & Miller, 2001). In addition, Cooper et al. (2000) found that direct parental involvement negatively affects the students' academic achievement.

Moreover, when parents get involved, they make a contribution to their children's emotional development and behavior (Cai et al., 1997), well-being (Pelletier & Brent, 2002), social skills (Sanders, 1998; Henderson & Mapp, 2002) and even school attendance (Haynes et al., 1989). Desimone (1999) suggested that parents' participation in school activities may establish connections between teachers and parents that have a positive influence on teachers' impressions of and views about students. In all cases, the importance of relationships between parents and school is inarguable because "the family is the most important and most enduring resource in a child's life" and "family-school partnerships produce impressive results for children and teachers" (Petr, 2003, p. 11).

However, the effects of not all forms of involvement are statistically significant (Jeynes, 2011). For instance, Jeynes (2011) identified that conversations about school between students

and their parents and parental participation at school events have a statistically considerable influence on the students' academic achievement whereas the effect of checking the students' homework by parents is not statistically significant. However, according to Jeynes (2007), the effect of parents' participation at school events on students' academic achievement is less than parents' expectancies and parental styles. Interestingly, parental expectancies and discussion have more influence on middle-income students' academic achievement than on low-income students' academic achievement (Desimone, 1999). Furthermore, Desimone (1999) identified that talking with their mother or both parents positively affect the students' academic success, but discussion with only their father can lead to a reduction in the students' test scores. Also, the research conducted by Bobbett et al. (1995) showed that the effects of parental involvement can be different based on the students' ages.

According to Fan and Chen (2001), parental control is weakly related to pupils' academic success, while parental desire and hope for students' academic success is strongly related to students' academic success. Fan and Chen (2001) found that close parental control may even have a negative influence on students' academic achievement. Finally, parental involvement plays an important role in general school culture. As Deal and Peterson (2009) stated: "A school, by its essential nature, must be an open system with highly permeable boundaries" and "parts of the school culture must reach out and connect with parents" (pp. 184-185).

Sociocultural Perspective

Researchers have suggested that children's sociocultural interactions go a long way in determining a child's literacy development within the dual contexts of school and home whether in a first or a second language (Barton & Hamilton, 1998; Bronfenbrenner, 1995; Street, 2003; Vygotsky, 1978; Walqui, 2006, Tan & Faraishaiyan, 2012). Walqui (2006) claimed that in every

English language program, the students' culture and native language need to be valued and consolidated through classroom activities, proposing that learning is more than mere cognitive development, but it is also heavily influenced by common social practices. According to Pérez (1998), discourse is essential within sociocultural contexts that focus on printed, written, and other literacy texts. Gee (2000) also suggested that these practices are more than just reading and writing; they are part of a larger communicative social system.

Furthermore, research proposes that home experiences are essential to developing a child's language and literacy skills (Heath, 1983; Lightsey & Frye, 2004), encouraging metalinguistic insights into the phonological, functional, and syntactic aspects of language that will, ultimately, facilitate literacy development (Lightsey & Frye, 2004). In addition, knowledge of book titles, reflecting exposure to literature at home and at school, is seen as a good predictor of reading achievement. Moreover, Liow (2005) concluded that home literacy has a strong influence on literacy development in general. However, according to Vygotsky (1978) such interactions develop our higher-order thinking skills, and this development occurs within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which explains the difference between what a child can accomplish independently and with help of others. This means that the child can perform with scaffolding and assistance from adults, whether teachers or parents (Carrera-Carrillo, 2003; Faltis, 2006; Walqui, 2006). Thus, adults transfer culture to their children through social interactions and language communication, which serve as a learning and mediating tool for children's intellectual transformation. Noormohamadi (2008) referred to the process of the language transfer from adults to children as self-regulation of language functions.

Barriers to Parental Involvement

Several barriers to parental involvement have been identified, including feelings of inadequacy and failure, a poor sense of self-worth, negative attitudes toward or bad experiences with schools, suspicion or anger that schools are not treating them or their children equally, cultural or language barriers, economic, emotional, or time constraints, parents' inflexible work schedules, and logistical problems, such as lack of child care or transportation (Floyd 1998; Gettinger & Guetschow 1998; Wheeler 1992). Moreover, Wheeler (1992) reported four more obstacles to parental involvement in schools: parents' negative attitudes toward the school and vice versa; the unwillingness of many teachers to accept parents' knowledge about their own children; unmatched expectations between the school's policy and practices and parents' concepts of parental involvement; and the school's inability to adapt to societal change. Shannon (1996) stated that "The paradox of parental involvement for minority parents is that teachers negatively view their traditional noninvolvement, but also respond negatively when those parents challenge the status quo and begin to behave like high-status parents" (p. 73). Even the attitude of involved parents may serve as a barrier to uninvolved parents when social class distinctions are felt (Want, 1997).

Parental involvement can be affected by several socio-political factors, such as socioeconomic condition and parents' negative school experience (LaRocque et al., 2011). Studies have shown that one of the factors contributing to the level of parental involvement is parents' educational background (Pena, 2000; Lee & Bowen, 2006; Jordan et al., 2001; Potvin et al., 1999; Crozier, 1999; Baeck, 2010). For example, Lee and Bowen (2006) found that parents with two-year or higher college degree have considerably more attendance in the activities or meetings organized at school, talk more often about educational issues with their children, and

expect their children to be more successful in their education. Conversely, parents whose educational levels are low may be less involved because they do not feel self-confident enough to contact school staff (Lee & Bowen, 2006). However, Pena (2000) identified that parents with low levels of education more frequently volunteer in different types of activities at schools than those with high levels of education. Pena (2000) stated that the problem for parents with low levels of education, as reported by the parents themselves, is that they cannot help their children with homework or other school-related issues because their knowledge is limited. However, when it comes to parents with a university degree, they show lack of time as a main reason for not getting involved (Baeck, 2010).

Another issue that has an influence on parental involvement is language (Aronson, 1996; LaRocque et al., 2011). The language used at schools is typically academic focused (LaRocque et al., 2011), and most school staff do not know how to contact parents with a different language background (Aronson, 1996). Even when parents and teachers do not have any problem in understanding each other, teachers' attitudes can also influence the level of involvement (Pena, 2000; Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). According to Mapp (2002), if parents trust the attitude of school staff, they are likely to get more involved because "every parent wants to trust the school and to be trusted" (Deal & Peterson, 2009, p189). Moreover, Pena (2000) identified that parents anticipate the most important encouragement from teachers, but sometimes they do not feel encouraged and welcome at school to be part of the teaching-learning process of their children. Comer and Haynes (1991) stated that teacher requests made within an adequate and welcoming school environment have a noticeable effect on parents deciding to get involved. However, sometimes parents' roles in getting involved are unclear, and they may need clear explanations

from teachers about what they are expected to do (LaRocque et al., 2011). Fields-Smith (2005) found that parents respond more frequently to teachers' demands that are well defined.

Learning About Your ESL Students and Teachers' Challenges

Newcomers and long-term English learners represent two important EL groups (Olsen, 2010). Whether immigrant or native born, each group brings its own history and culture to the enterprise of schooling (Heath, 1986). In the United States, native-born ELs outnumber those who were born in foreign countries. According to one survey, only 24 percent of ELs in elementary school were foreign born whereas 44 percent of secondary school ELs were born outside the United States (Capps et al., 2005). That is why Peregoy and Boyle (2000) suggested to find out basic facts about the students such as country the students are from, how long they have lived in the United States, where and with whom the students are living, and migratory status. Some children have experienced traumatic events before and during immigration, and the process of adjustment to a new country may represent yet another link in a chain of stressful life events (Olsen, 1998). Moreover, Peregoy and Boyle (1991) also recommended obtaining as much information about the student's prior school experiences as possible.

Furthermore, teachers have to take into consideration all the aspects related to their students, including students' gender, which may be considered as a factor contributing to parental involvement (Deslandes & Potvin, 1999; Carter & Wojtkiewicz, 2000). Deslandes and Potvin (1999) found that male students' mothers contact teachers more frequently than female ones. In addition, according to Cooper et al. (2000), male students' parents' involvement levels are higher than female students in elementary school, but in high school female students' parents' involvement levels are higher than male students. Furthermore, according to Eccles and

Harold (1996), parents of students with high achievement are more willing to take part in the activities organized by school than those of students with low achievement.

Conclusions

In conclusion, according to the literature reviewed, it is possible to say that several factors have affected the level of parental involvement in education to support their children, leading to student success. The most frequent factors are parents' educational background, lack of time, language, culture, and school staff attitudes and environment. Also, this information indicates that school leaders must identify factors that inhibit parental involvement and strive to overcome them while building programs around those characteristics that motivate parents to become involved in their children's education. When schools recognize the importance of parental engagement in education, and then implement effective strategies to foster strong school-home relationships, this will establish the kind of strong learning community that supports the development of all children in school and at home.

Chapter 3: Project Design

In this chapter, I explain the rationale behind creating a handbook that provides guidance for parental engagement in the teaching-learning process of English learners. This handbook will assist parents and their children with academic support strategies and general information that will be useful in helping them to determine who and what to look for in the school or in the community to obtain the necessary information to support students. With this guidance, teachers would not only be focusing on creating engaging lessons for students as they usually do, but also creating information for parents to help them support their children. Teachers would create parental engagement opportunities that will have a meaningful impact on students' education and hold them accountable. This is important because parental involvement can have a positive impact by providing students with extra help at home.

Parental involvement does have a positive influence on the students' academic success (Fan & Chen, 2001; Jeynes, 2003; Jordan et al., 2001; Gonzalez-Pienda et al., 2002; Henderson & Mapp, 2002). According to Shaver and Walls (1998), students with high levels of parental involvement are better at reading and math than those with a low level of parental involvement. To achieve effective communication and positive parental involvement, we must take into consideration certain aspects such as, cultural diversity, the native language of students and their families, the context in which our students live, and their backgrounds. In the same way, teachers need to become aware of basic features of their students' home cultures, such as religious beliefs and customs, food preferences and restrictions, and roles and responsibilities of children and

adults (Ovando et al., 2012; Saville-Troike, 1978). Therefore, teachers need to be aware of the kind of community they serve, know the right way to approach them, and embrace cultural diversity. Successful strategies for building bridges for low-income parents include setting clear goals to develop school-family partnerships, expanding services to children and families to include health services, social services, and family support, celebrating cultural differences, and teaching the parents (Kreider & Lopez, 1999).

On the one hand, several barriers to parental involvement have been identified, including feelings of inadequacy and failure, a poor sense of self-worth, negative attitudes toward or bad experiences with schools, suspicion or anger that schools are not treating them or their children equally, cultural or language barriers, economic, emotional, or time constraints, parents' inflexible work schedules, and logistical problems, such as lack of child care or transportation (Floyd 1998; Gettinger & Guetschow 1998; Wheeler 1992). On the other hand, Krahn and Taylor (2005) suggested that immigrants highly value the education of their children. However, not all newcomer parents possess the knowledge about the school system and are engaged with their children's teachers, the school or other parents in typical ways expected in Western settings (Kanu, 2008; Guo, 2006).

The final product of this project is a tool that provides parents with accurate information about regular classes and how to help their children. Therefore, with this tool parents will learn how to create goals for their children in the process of their second language acquisition. In addition, when using this handbook, parents will have a clearer idea of what is happening in the classroom and the contents, and standards their children are learning. Through this project, students are directly supported, but the perfect trinomial of education that involves teachers, students, and parents is also strengthened. Moreover, this handbook will be of great help for

specially Title I schools which survive within this reality every day. The lack of parental involvement is difficult to eradicate in these types of communities, but it will be very helpful for those who are looking for alternatives and to be an active contributor of the teaching-learning process.

Ultimately, this handbook will also provide a guide to where parents can go for integral education, health, and legal support. This project will very supportive, especially for newcomers to the country and people who do not speak the English language, and it will counter the notion that they are incapable of getting involved in the academic development of their children. This is an academic support guide for parents to help them get involved and be active and participatory members of their children's teaching-learning process. Through the help of technology, it is key to be able to provide personalized support with a series of educational resources that can be constantly updated. The digital resources that serve as a guide for parents are web pages, applications, platforms, games, and general information that guide parents and students in the process of adapting to a new community and to the teaching-learning process. This project is important because by involving and holding parents accountable in the process, better results will be obtained at the school, community, and even national level. The burden of teachers is lightened a little in this type of context and even better outcomes will be achieved by our students who will be more responsible and will follow the example of their parents; the direct beneficiaries of this are the children as it will help ensure educational success.

Chapter 4: The Project

The product of this project includes a handbook created for parents with information about parental engagement, strategies to support their children at home, learn to identify who is who at their child's school, and information about the community and school.

Introduction

Parental engagement in the teaching-learning process has positive outcomes in students' achievements. Parent, would you like to know how to get involved or be even more involved in your child's education? Teacher, would you like to guide your ESL learners and their parents with tools that can bring awareness and improvement in their language learning journey?

The implementation of this handbook will not only help parents find ways to support their children's education, but it will also help them to find useful information for their families around the community. This handbook will empower parents, make them more involved, and encourage them to be active participants in the teaching-learning process.

What is parental involvement?

It is defined as parents and school staff working together to support and improve the learning and development of children and adolescents. Parental involvement is believed to support many dimensions of student achievement, such as helping children earn higher grades and tests scores, improve school attendance, increase graduation rates, and foster positive attitudes about school.



PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Successful Parental Engagement and Its Benefits

Parents who are involved in school activities, such as attending parent-teacher conferences, monitoring their children's progress, and helping with homework are more likely to have children performing well academically (Bogenschneider, 1997). Moreover, multiple studies have specifically highlighted the fact that Hispanic immigrant parents place a high value on education and are strongly motivated to support their children's success in U.S. schools (Delgado-Gaitán, 1992; González et al., 1993; López, 2001; Valdés, 1996).

Ways You Can Help Your Children Succeed at School

As a parent, you are your child's first and most important teacher. When parents and families are involved in their children's schools, the children do better and have better feelings about going to school.

Help your child to become an avid reader

There are lots of ways that you can help your children learn to read! From the time that they are babies to the time that they are in high school, there are many little steps you can take along the way — rhyming and singing songs, reading out loud, sounding out letters, going to the library, and reading books together in your home language. Helping your children learn to read might also

mean finding support if they are having difficulty, which can affect their future success. This section is filled with tips for what you can do at home, fun activities, suggestions for choosing books to share together, and ideas on how you can prepare your child for a lifetime and love of reading.

Tips for Teaching Your Child About Phonemes

As the parent of a young child, you probably have a sense that you should help your child learn the letters of the alphabet. As the foundation for all written words, letters are important because they are the symbols for the small actions your mouth makes as you say words. What's equally important, however, is that your child learns the sound associated with each letter. These individual sounds are called phonemes, and children who know about the connection between a letter and its phoneme have an easier time learning to read.

Parent Guide: Who's Who at Your Child's School

There are many people at your child's school who are there to help your child learn, grow socially and emotionally, and navigate the school environment. Here's a selected list of who's who at your school: the teaching and administrative staff as well as organizations at the district level. You might want to keep this list handy all year long.

How To Know When Your Child Needs Extra Help

Children learn differently and at different rates. Some kids need extra time learning to read, for example, especially if they're also learning a second language. On the other hand, some children might have trouble seeing, hearing, or speaking. Others may have a learning disability. If you

think your child may have some kind of physical or learning problem, it is important to talk with your child's teacher, and perhaps to get expert help if needed.

Homework Tips for Parents

Help your child learn about new words or content in a variety of ways. Talk about new vocabulary words several times over the course of the week, in different settings. This will help enrich your child's understanding of the word.

Read to Your Kids in Your Home Language to Become Better Readers

As a parent, you may be wondering whether you should be reading to your children in Spanish or English. You may be afraid that reading to them in Spanish will confuse them as they try to learn English, and that it will make it harder for them to read in English. You may also be concerned that you shouldn't read to them in English if you don't feel comfortable with your own English skills.

Things to do in Monroe

Monroe is known for several large and very popular antique or flea markets, such as Ian Henderson's Antique Market and Sweet Union Flea Market. Certain attractions may be temporarily closed or require advance reservations. Some restaurants are currently offering pickup only. Hours/availability may have changed.

Chapter 5: Conclusions

The teaching-learning process can often be stressful in its regular execution, but this can become even more complex when there are barriers such as language, adaptation, and resilience. Newcomer students, their families, and the entire educational community face many challenges to achieve the adaptation and success of students in their school life despite learning a new language and adapting to the standards created for native speakers of the English language. It is important that language students, through the tools provided by teachers, reach a level that makes it easier for them to understand the content and standards and feel that they belong to this new community. That is why it is important for parents to educate themselves to create an environment that allows language learners to thrive.

Throughout this project, I have realized the important role that parents play and how important it is to know our students and their families' backgrounds. In schools, we always talk about the influence exerted by parents and that they should get involved because this is beneficial for their children's education. However, we give parents very few tools to awaken their desire for involvement not only with their children but with the school community in general. I have a clearer vision of what parental engagement represents by working in a Title I school, specifically in the elementary area. I have learned that newcomers to the country and other minority groups can be affected in the learning process and create an obstacle that prevents the good educational development of these students.

On the one hand, all the teaching staff of the school must create resources and tools that facilitate extra support at home for parents. On many occasions, the lack of guidance is what

affects parental engagement. It is very important to create a bond among parents, students, and the educational community. On the other hand, parents must assume responsibility for support at home, by helping with homework, identifying which learning needs their child has, and knowing the school staff in order to know who to contact in case the student needs help with something specific. The positive results through parental involvement and teamwork among all involved will be many and higher-grade point averages for all our students. In addition, it is clear that parental involvement supports many dimensions of student achievement, such as helping children earn higher grades and tests scores, improving school attendance, increasing graduation rates, and fostering positive attitudes about school.

However, it is necessary to find solutions because, in many schools, and communities that we serve, our students live in a complex context. It is possible to say that several factors have affected the level of parental involvement in education to support their children, leading to student success. The most frequent factors are parents' educational background, lack of time, language, culture, and school staff attitudes and environment. Also, this information indicates that school leaders must identify factors that inhibit parental involvement and strive to overcome them while building programs around those characteristics that motivate parents to become involved in their children's education. When schools recognize the importance of parental engagement in education, and then implement effective strategies to foster strong school-home relationships, this will establish the kind of strong learning community that supports the development of all children in school and at home.

I hope that the project I created will help create better involvement and participation on the part of parents of English language learners. The main objective of this project is to encourage

parents to take direct control of their children's education. Advocate for education that is personalized and appropriate to the needs of their children because each student is unique. Teachers should receive training on teaching students learning English as a second language, because that is a teaching that involves a differentiated procedure that supports the needs of these students to develop the four macro skills in the English language. They also should receive information on the background of the students and their families. I hope that the handbook I have created will serve as a practical resource for new teachers and families in the community, preparing to support new students whose numbers are increasing every day.

Appendix

Appendix A: Handbook

Handbook for Parents of Information and Strategies to Support ELL Students



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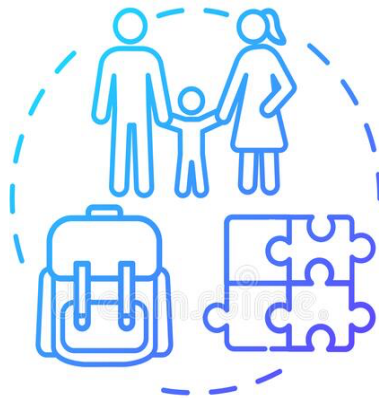
Introduction

Parental engagement in the teaching-learning process has positive outcomes in students' achievements. Parent, would you like to know how to get involved or be even more involved in your child's education? Teacher, would you like to guide your ESL learners and their parents with tools that can bring awareness and improvement in their language learning journey?

The implementation of this handbook will not only help parents find ways to support their children's education, but it will also help them to find useful information for their families around the community. This handbook will empower parents, make them more involved, and encourage them to be active participants in the teaching-learning process.

What is parental involvement?

It is defined as parents and school staff working together to support and improve the learning and development of children and adolescents. Parental involvement is believed to support many dimensions of student achievement, such as helping children earn higher grades and tests scores, improve school attendance, increase graduation rates, and foster positive attitudes about school.



**PARENTAL
INVOLVEMENT**

Successful Parental Engagement and Its Benefits

Parents who are involved in school activities, such as attending parent-teacher conferences, monitoring their children's progress, and helping with homework are more likely to have children performing well academically (Bogenschneider, 1997). Moreover, multiple studies have specifically highlighted the fact that Hispanic immigrant parents place a high value on education and are strongly motivated to support their children's success in U.S. schools (Delgado-Gaitán, 1992; González et al., 1993; López, 2001; Valdés, 1996).

Students who have parents involved in their school life have:

1. Better student behavior
2. Better school attendance
3. Higher academic performance.
4. Higher school completion rates.
5. Enhanced social skills.

Barriers to Parental Involvement

Several barriers to parental involvement have been identified, including feelings of inadequacy and failure, a poor sense of self-worth, negative attitudes toward or bad experiences with schools, suspicion or anger that schools are not treating them or their children equally, cultural or language barriers, economic, emotional, or time constraints, parents' inflexible work schedules, and logistical problems, such as lack of child care or transportation (Floyd 1998; Gettinger & Guetschow 1998; Wheeler 1992).

Please complete this [form](#) to help us to identify the barriers that hinder the involvement of parents in our educational community.

QR code for this form



Ways You Can Help Your Children Succeed at School

As a parent, you are your child's first and most important teacher. When parents and families are involved in their children's schools, the children do better and have better feelings about going to school.

- **Develop a partnership with your child's teachers and school staff**

1. Meet your child's teacher. As soon as the school year starts, try to find a way to meet your child's teacher. Let the teacher know you want to help your child learn. Make it clear that you want the teacher to contact you if any problems develop with your child. [Talk with your child's teacher](#) offers some great tips for developing a partnership with your child's teacher.

If you feel uncomfortable speaking English, don't let a language barrier stop you. What you have to say is more important than the language you say it in! Ask the school to find someone who can interpret for you. There may be a teacher or parent liaison who can help. Or you can bring a bilingual friend or relative with you.

2. Get to know who's who at your child's school. There are many people at your child's school who are there to help your child learn, grow socially and emotionally, and navigate the school environment.

3. Attend parent-teacher conferences and keep in touch with your child's teacher. Schools usually have one or two parent-teacher conferences each year. You can bring a friend to interpret for you or ask the school to provide an interpreter. You can also ask to meet with your child's teacher any time during the year. If you have a concern and can't meet face-to-face, send the teacher a short note or set up a time to talk on the phone.

- **Support your child academically**

4. Find out how your child is doing. Ask the teacher how well your child is doing in class compared to other students. If your child is not keeping up, especially when it comes to reading, ask what you or the school can do to help. It's important to act early before your child gets too far behind. Also be sure to review your child's report card each time it comes out.

5. Apply for special services if you think your child may need it. If your child is having problems with learning, ask the school to evaluate your child in his or her strongest language. The teacher might be able to provide accommodations for your child in class. If the school finds out your child has a learning disability, he can receive extra help at no cost.

6. Make sure that your child gets homework done. Let your child know that you think education is important and that homework needs to be done each day. You can help your child with homework by setting aside a special place to study, establishing a regular time for homework, and removing distractions such as the television and social phone calls during homework time.

If you are reluctant to help your child with homework because you feel that you don't know the subject well enough or because you don't speak or read English, you can help by showing that you are interested, helping your child get organized, providing the necessary materials, asking your child about daily assignments, monitoring work to make sure that it is completed, and praising all of your child's efforts. Remember that doing your child's homework for him won't help him in the long run.

7. Find homework help for your child if needed. If it is difficult for you to help your child with homework or school projects, see if you can find someone else who can help. Contact the school,

tutoring groups, after school programs, churches, and libraries. Or see if an older student, neighbor, or friend can help.

8. Help your child prepare for tests. Tests play an important role in determining a student's grade. Your child may also take one or more standardized tests during the school year, and your child's teacher may spend class time on test preparation throughout the year. As a parent, there are a number of ways that you can support your child before and after taking a standardized test, as well as a number of ways you can support your child's learning habits on a daily basis that will help her be more prepared when it's time to be tested.

- **Support your child's learning at home**

9. Demonstrate a positive attitude about education to your children. What we say and do in our daily lives can help them to develop positive attitudes toward school and learning and to build confidence in themselves as learners. Showing our children that we both value education and use it in our daily lives provides them with powerful models and contributes greatly to their success in school.

In addition, by showing interest in their children's education, parents and families can spark enthusiasm in them and lead them to a very important understanding-that learning can be enjoyable as well as rewarding and is well worth the effort required.

10. Monitor your child's television, video game, and Internet use. American children on average spend far more time watching TV, playing video games and using the Internet than they do completing homework or other school-related activities.

11. Encourage your child to read. Helping your child become a reader is the single most important thing that you can do to help the child to succeed in school-and in life. The importance of reading simply can't be overstated. Reading helps children in all school subjects. More important, it is the key to lifelong learning.

12. Talk with your child. Talking and listening play major roles in children's school success. It's through hearing parents and family members talk and through responding to that talk those young children begin to pick up the language skills they will need if they are to do well. For example, children who don't hear a lot of talk and who aren't encouraged to talk themselves often have problems learning to read, which can lead to other school problems. In addition, children who haven't learned to listen carefully often have trouble following directions and paying attention in class. It's also important for you to show your child that you're interested in what he has to say.

13. Encourage your child to use the library. Libraries are places of learning and discovery for everyone. Helping your child find out about libraries will set him on the road to being an independent learner. Remember that libraries also offer a quiet place for students to complete homework, and are often open in the evening.

14. Encourage your child to be responsible and work independently. Taking responsibility and working independently are important qualities for school success. You can help your child to develop these qualities by establish reasonable rules that you enforce consistently, making it clear to your child that he has to take responsibility for what he does, both at home and at school, showing your child how to break a job down into small steps, and monitor what your child does after school, in the evenings and on weekends. If you can't be there when your child gets home, give her the responsibility of checking in with you by phone to discuss her plans.

15. Encourage active learning. Children need active learning as well as quiet learning such as reading and doing homework. Active learning involves asking and answering questions, solving problems and exploring interests. Active learning also can take place when your child plays sports, spends time with friends, acts in a school play, plays a musical instrument or visits museums and bookstores. To promote active learning, listen to your child's ideas and respond to them. Let him jump in with questions and opinions when you read books together. When you encourage this type of give-and-take at home, your child's participation and interest in school is likely to increase.

Help your child to become an avid reader

There are lots of ways that you can help your children learn to read! From the time that they are babies to the time that they are in high school, there are many little steps you can take along the way — rhyming and singing songs, reading out loud, sounding out letters, going to the library, and reading books together in your home language. Helping your children learn to read might also mean finding support if they are having difficulty, which can affect their future success. This section is filled with tips for what you can do at home, fun activities, suggestions for choosing books to share together, and ideas on how you can prepare your child for a lifetime and love of reading.

Getting Ready to Read



There are lots of things you can do at home to help your child get ready to read! Pointing out letters, practicing sounds, singing nursery rhymes, and reading stories together are just a few examples of the activities included in this section.

Tips for Teaching Your Child About Phonemes

As the parent of a young child, you probably have a sense that you should help your child learn the letters of the alphabet. As the foundation for all written words, letters are important because they are the symbols for the small actions your mouth makes as you say words. What's equally important, however, is that your child learns the sound associated with each letter. These individual

sounds are called phonemes, and children who know about the connection between a letter and its phoneme have an easier time learning to read.

These four tips were initially written for teachers, but have been adapted here for parents.

1. Focus on one sound at a time

Certain sounds, such as /s/, /m/, /f/ are great sounds to start with. The sound is distinct, and can be exaggerated easily. "Please pass the mmmmmmmilk." "Look! There's a ssssssssssnake!" "You have fffffffive markers on the table." It's also easy to describe how to make the sound with your mouth. "Close your mouth and lips to make the sound. Now put your hand on your throat. Do you feel the vibration?" Once your child learns a few phonemes, it will be easier to keep talking about letters and sounds.

2. Make the learning memorable!

Have fun with the letters and sounds. Gestures, such as a "**m**unching **m**outh" made with your hand can make the /m/ sound much more fun! "Slithering snakes" made with an arm or hand can make the /s/ sound easy to remember. Tongue tickers, also called alliterative words, in which the sound you're focusing on is repeated over and over again, can be a fun way to provide practice with a sound. Try these!

- For M: Miss Mouse makes marvelous meatballs!
- For S: Silly Sally sings songs about snakes and snails.
- For F: Freddy finds fireflies with a flashlight.

3. Help your child listen for the sounds

One part of learning letters and sounds is being able to figure out if a word contains a particular sound. "Do we hear /mmmmmmm/ in the word mmmmmmoon? Do we hear /mmmmmmm/ in the

word *cake*?" These sorts of activities, done orally with your child, can help him begin to listen for and hear sounds within words.

4. Apply letter-sound skills to reading

Putting these skills to work within a book is a powerful way to help your child see the connection between letters, sounds, and words. As you're reading together, find places in the book to point out the letters and sounds you've been working on together. "Look! This page says 'Red **f**ish, blue **f**ish.'" There's the /ffffff/ sound we've been having fun with! It's at the beginning of the word *fish*."

Parent Guide: Who's Who at Your Child's School

There are many people at your child's school who are there to help your child learn, grow socially and emotionally, and navigate the school environment. Here's a selected list of who's who at your school: the teaching and administrative staff as well as organizations at the district level. You might want to keep this list handy all year long.

In the Classroom

Subject-Area Teacher: Around fourth grade, students begin having different teachers for each subject in middle school. Middle and secondary school teachers specialize in a specific subject, such as English or history, or even career-oriented ones like cooking or automotive repair. Like elementary teachers, middle and secondary school teachers work with school counselors and with special education teachers on Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). Whenever you have a concern about your child's academic progress, you should seek out the teacher or teachers involved.

Special Education Teacher: Special education teachers help children with learning disabilities and their families over an entire academic career, starting with the IEP, which sets personalized learning outcomes. They work closely with general education teachers to coordinate students' individualized educational experience and develop specific steps to prepare the students with disabilities for middle school, high school, or, for older students, jobs or further study. You may use the special education teacher as a resource, too, in learning what to do at home to support what your child is learning at school. Also, you may follow your child's behavioral progress with the teacher.

ESL Teacher: English as a Second Language Teachers specialize in helping non-native students master English language and culture, and may also support instruction in reading and basic content knowledge, such as science or history facts. By providing English skills as well as content knowledge, ESL courses help students join a general classroom appropriate for their age and abilities. Teachers may be ESL-certified in addition to their primary teaching area; for example, a teacher may be an elementary education teacher with ESL certification, or a teacher's primary certification may be in ESL. When you speak with your child's ESL teacher, you will learn about your child's progress with English skills as well as with mastering the content. (Sometimes these teachers are referred to as ELL, ELD, or ESOL teachers as well.) Some ESL teachers may be fluent in another language and culture, but it is not necessarily a requirement in order to teach English as a second language.

Support Within the School

Assistant Principal: Sometimes called vice-principals, they help the school principal by becoming primarily responsible for an administrative area of the school. Your child's school may have one or several assistant principals, depending on how many students attend. Assistant principals may

handle student discipline and attendance problems, recreational programs, and health matters. For example, if your child must miss school for an extended time, perhaps because of an illness, you may work with an assistant principal to decide how your child will keep up with schoolwork and how the absence will impact your child's academic record.

Guidance Counselors: Counselors help students with social, behavioral, and personal challenges to develop the life skills to succeed. At the middle and high school levels, counselors provide increasingly more vocational and academic counseling, including helping students evaluate their own interests and abilities. High school counselors also help students plan their post-graduation experiences, by advising them about college admissions, resume writing, apprenticeships, and more. You may want to speak with the counselor about your thoughts on your child's post-graduation opportunities.

Occupational Therapist: Occupational therapists (OT) help schoolchildren who suffer from a disabling condition, whether mental, physical, developmental, or emotional, to develop and maintain daily living skills. In schools, for example, the occupational therapists assess children's capabilities, recommend therapy, adapt classroom equipment, and help children participate in school activities. For disabled students approaching a transition, such moving on to high school, or, for older students, jobs or further study, an occupation therapist can help design therapies targeted to specific skills that will be needed.

Principal: Each school has one principal, who sets the academic and administrative expectations for the school. The principal is responsible for ensuring the school meets state, local, and federal goals on test results. Principals meet with teachers, work with staff, talk with parents, report to the school board, and, if needed, discipline students. Principals are the school's decision maker and

chief public representative. You may speak with the principal about your child, such as his or her class placement, as well as about school issues that concern you.

Reading Specialist: A reading specialist provides reading services across the curriculum. For example, the specialist may work individually with a struggling student, as well as work with the literacy coach to manage the reading support services provided at the school. The specialist may also train teachers on reading strategies for the classroom. You may contact a reading specialist with questions about your child's reading habits.

School Psychologists: These professionals apply the psychology of learning to provide safe, healthy, and supportive learning environments for all. They collaborate with teachers, parents, and school personnel to address students' learning and behavioral problems and growth. For example, they may oversee a school's peer counseling program. If your child is identified with special learning needs, either disabilities or giftedness, you may meet with the school psychologist to help plan his or her education.

Secretary: The school secretary manages the administrative work of the school, ranging from registering students to scheduling appointments with the principal, from answering phone calls to monitoring attendance. Frequently, a school has a secretarial team of a few people to handle all the work. When you call or visit the school, a secretary will help you reach the person you need.

Speech-Language Pathologist or Speech Therapist: These therapists help students with problems relating to speech, language, and voice communication, such as stuttering or understanding language. They can assess and diagnose problems, as well as treat existing conditions or help prevent such disorders. If your child regularly has trouble saying or responding to certain words, you may want to seek help from the school's speech-language pathologist.

Teacher Aide, Teacher Assistant, Instructional Aide: They offer support in a number of ways, often extending the individual attention that can be given to students. Middle or high school paraprofessionals may specialize in a subject, such as science or history, and may tutor, take charge of special projects, or prepare equipment, as well as monitor the cafeteria. Paraprofessionals also work with special needs children, helping them participate successfully in a general classroom. You may want to speak with all of the educators who regularly works with your child to stay informed of your child's progress.

Support Around the School

PTA/PTO: The Parent-Teacher Association (or organization) brings the parents together on behalf of the school through activities like parent newsletters, special events, and fundraisers.

School Board: The board is responsible for the legislative functioning of the public school district. Its members are elected, appointed, or both. The school board also oversees the budget for the district and makes district-level policy decisions. School board meetings are open to the public — check its website for a meeting schedule — and you can lobby the school board on their decisions, like which schools will have special programs.

How To Know When Your Child Needs Extra Help

Children learn differently and at different rates. Some kids need extra time learning to read, for example, especially if they're also learning a second language. On the other hand, some children might have trouble seeing, hearing, or speaking. Others may have a learning disability. If you

think your child may have some kind of physical or learning problem, it is important to talk with your child's teacher, and perhaps to get expert help if needed.

Recognizing Reading Problems

Learning to read is a challenge for many kids, but most can become good readers if they get the right help. Parents have an important job in recognizing when a child is struggling and knowing how to find help.

What to look for:

- Difficulty rhyming
- Difficulty hearing individual sounds
- Difficulty following directions
- Difficulty re-telling a story
- Struggles to sound out most words
- Avoids reading aloud

What to do:

Step 1: Meet with your child's teacher

Gather examples of your child's work that reflects your concerns. Ask the teacher for his/her observations and discuss what can be done at school and at home. Stay in touch with the teacher to monitor your child's progress.

Step 2: Meet with the principal and/or reading specialist

If your child's performance does not improve, meet with other professionals in the building to see if there are classes, services, or other to receive special education services.

Step 3: Get a referral for special education

If you have tried all interventions, request an evaluation. Talk to the principal to schedule this.

Step 4: Get an evaluation

A professional team — which may include a school psychologist, a speech-language pathologist, or a reading specialist — gives your child a series of tests and determines whether s/he is eligible to receive special education services.

Step 5: Determine eligibility

If your child is found eligible for services, you and the school develop your child's Individualized Education Program (IEP), a plan that sets goals based on your child's specific learning needs and offers special services like small group instruction, tutoring, and assistive technology. If your child is not eligible, stay involved and keep talking to the teacher about your child's progress. You can also turn to private tutoring for extra support interventions available.

Homework Tips for Parents**Study the same things in different ways and places**

Help your child learn about new words or content in a variety of ways. Talk about new vocabulary words several times over the course of the week, in different settings. This will help enrich your child's understanding of the word.

Mix up the study time

If your child prefers to do a little math, a little reading, a little word study and then back to math, that's okay! Mixing up the practice time may leave a greater impression on your learner.

Space out the learning

If your child has a big test coming up next week, help her study a little bit each day rather than cramming it in the night before. An hour or so every other day, spacing out the learning, is a better way to really learn the material.

Help your child get organized

Help your child pick out a special homework notebook or folder, and make sure your child has homework supplies, such as:

- pencils
- pens
- writing paper
- a dictionary

Show your child that you think homework is important

Ask your child about her homework each day, and check to see that it is completed. Tell your child that you are proud of the work she is doing.

Help your child without doing the homework

It's important to answer questions if you can — but remember that homework is supposed to help children learn and that doing your child's homework does not help in the long run.

Talk with your child's teacher

Find out what the teacher's homework rules are. If your child has a problem completing or understanding homework, call or e-mail the teacher to talk about the issue.

Helping Your Child with Homework

Homework: A Concern for the Whole Family

Homework is an opportunity for children to learn and for families to be involved in their children's education. However, helping children with homework isn't always easy. At parent-teacher meetings and in conferences with parents, teachers often hear questions such as:

- How can I get Michael to do his homework? Every night it's a struggle to get him to turn off the TV and do his homework.
- Why isn't Maria getting more homework?
- Why is Jonathan getting so much homework?
- When is Suki supposed to do homework? She takes piano lessons, sings in her church choir, plays basketball and helps with family chores. There's hardly any time left to study.
- How can I help Robert with his math homework when I don't understand it?
- Do homework assignments really help my child learn?

This article helps answer these and other questions that parents, family members, and others who care for children in elementary and middle school often ask about homework. The booklet also includes practical ideas for helping children to complete homework assignments successfully.

More homework tips for families

See additional ideas in this [bilingual article](#) for families!

The article contains the following sections:

The Basics

- Why Do Teachers Assign Homework?
- Does Homework Help Children Learn?
- What's the Right Amount of Homework?

How to Help: Show That You Think Education and Homework Education Are Important

- Set a Regular Time for Homework
- Pick a Place
- Remove Distractions
- Provide Supplies and Identify Resources
- Set a Good Example
- Be Interested and Interesting

How to Help: Monitor Assignments

- Ask about the School's Homework Policy
- Be Available
- Look over Completed Assignments
- Monitor Time Spent Viewing TV and Playing Video Games

How to Help: Monitor Assignments

- Help Your Child Get Organized
- Encourage Good Study Habits
- Talk about the Assignments
- Watch for Frustration
- Give Praise

How to Help: Talk with Teachers to Resolve Problems

- Tell the Teacher about Your Concerns
- Work with the Teacher

Read to Your Kids in Your Home Language to Become Better Readers

As a parent, you may be wondering whether you should be reading to your children in Spanish or English. You may be afraid that reading to them in Spanish will confuse them as they try to learn English, and that it will make it harder for them to read in English. You may also be concerned that you shouldn't read to them in English if you don't feel comfortable with your own English skills.

While it is important to encourage and support your child's efforts to learn English, research shows that children who are read to in their native language (such as Spanish) will have an easier time

learning to read in their second language (such as English). The benefits are even greater for children who learn to read first in their native language. This means that by developing your child's literacy skills in Spanish, you will be making it easier for them to learn to speak, read, and write English in the future. This article provides information about the research done on this topic, and suggestions of ways that you can help your child develop his or her literacy skills in your family's native language.

A number of studies have been conducted about the ways in which children learn to read in a second language most effectively. Some of the results of those studies include the following findings:

1. Young children who were exposed to age-appropriate books and literature in their native language developed stronger pre-literacy skills than children who were only exposed to books in their second language (Association for Childhood Education International, 2003).
2. Children who learn to read in their native language first will have an easier time learning to read in their second language than children who never learned how to read in their first language (Anstrom, 1999). Children who can read in their native language understand the process of reading, even if they need to learn new letters, sounds, and words to attain reading proficiency in a second language. Children who are learning to read for the first time in their second language have twice as much work to do because they are learning the process of reading from the beginning at the same time that they are learning a new language (Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007).

3. Although children seem to learn new languages very quickly, without a strong cognitive foundation in their first language, children learning a second language "will tend to take much longer to acquire cognitive academic language skills in the second language" (Ramirez et.al, 1991).
4. The first three years of a child's life are critical to brain development, and increased exposure to a child's native language lays an important foundation for strong literacy skills when the child is older (Department of Education, Archived Information). In addition, when a child's brain is exposed to language at a very young age, the brain develops a life-long capacity to learn language, including foreign languages (McGill University, 2002).
5. Infants exposed to spoken language (reading out loud, talking, singing, and listening to music) show more language proficiency and better reading skills once they enter school than those who had not heard a lot of spoken language during their infancy (Center for Early Education and Development, 2001).

Discover Monroe, NC



The city of Monroe is a vibrant and progressive city that serves as the hub of retail, government, culture, and industry in Union County.

From the large historic district complete with stately homes and a newly revitalized downtown to its industrial core attracting businesses from across the globe to the ever-growing retail marketplace, Monroe has something to offer to all.

The downtown area is currently in the throes of a revitalization plan that has been spearheaded by city leaders. The plan is geared to increase traffic to downtown businesses as well as to show off the charm of the tree-lined streets and make the downtown area a destination for families. Several activities like live music, antique car cruise-ins, and outdoor movies, to name just a few, are held throughout the year. At times, the downtown also finds itself the center of attention as film crews use the backdrop of the historic Union County courthouse and charm of Main Street in major motion pictures.

Monroe continues to grow its industrial base in the Monroe Corporate Center, strategically located adjacent to the Charlotte-Monroe Executive Airport and South Piedmont Community College. The Corporate Center plays home to several international and local companies and has room for continued development. Monroe is known for its aerospace industry cluster. The recent growth of this business segment goes hand-in-hand with the growth at the airport. The 6,000-square-foot terminal overlooks a runway that has been recently expanded to 7,000 feet

to attract businesses that will land and store their private jets in Monroe.

Other retail development along U.S. 74 includes large national retailers as well as small family-owned businesses. This development has occurred at a steady pace, giving residents shopping options that will keep them close to home. South Piedmont Community College strengthens the city's economic and educational future. SPCC has two campuses on Old Charlotte Highway and offers numerous degree programs along with continuing education, college transfer, basic skills, and workforce training. Monroe is also home to Carolinas Medical Center-Union, Novant Health Medical Plaza, and several medical offices and specialists to provide the highest level of medical care available.

Regarding recreation, Monroe is home to the Monroe Aquatics and Fitness Center, a state-of-the-art facility complete with workout area, basketball courts, indoor swimming pool, and an outdoor water park. The city of Monroe also operates the Monroe Country Club, a municipal golf course that is truly a delight to play.

Whatever your need or desire, Monroe is your destination.

Things to do in Monroe

Monroe is known for several large and very popular antique or flea markets, such as Ian Henderson's Antique Market and Sweet Union Flea Market. Certain attractions may be

temporarily closed or require advance reservations. Some restaurants are currently offering pickup only. Hours/availability may have changed.

1. Aw Shucks farms



Aw Shucks Farms is a popular fall destination for all ages. There is a 6-acre corn maze, a pumpkin patch, hayrides, an animal barn, frequent concerts on their outdoor stage, bonfires, a fishing pond, a haunted trail, and an old-fashioned general store with all sorts of interesting things.

3718 Plyler Mill Rd, Monroe, NC 28112, Phone: 704-709-7000

2. Sweet Union Flea Market



Over 300 Vendors, mostly outdoors! Many indoor vendors too in our three large climate-controlled buildings! Produce and bulk natural foods galore! Make this your first stop for healthy foods. Open Saturdays and Sundays, except for Christmas Day and Easter Sunday Hours: 8:00 am to 3:00 pm on Saturdays 8:00 am to 3:00 pm on Sunday's Indoor restaurant and outside food trucks. Authentic Mexican foods and more traditional American fare. Free admission and parking for shoppers. Please see our website for vendor prices.

4420 W Hwy 74, Monroe, NC 28110

3. Why Not an American Ark



Why Not an American Ark's 125 acres of rolling farmland offers a scenic open relaxed atmosphere for guests to enjoy the outdoors and interact with nature. The multiple ponds and trails make the perfect setting for outdoor activities. The Ark is now home to the Two-by-Two Petting Zoo which houses a variety of animals large and small, young and old including camels, zebras, donkeys, goats and bunnies.

3224 Medlin Rd, Monroe, NC 28112

4. Historic Downtown Monroe Gateway Park



302 Lancaster Ave, Monroe, NC 28112

5. Carowinds



Carowinds is a 407-acre amusement park located adjacent to Interstate 77 in Charlotte, North Carolina. The park straddles the North Carolina-South Carolina state line, with a portion of the park located in Fort Mill, South Carolina.

300 Carowinds Blvd, Charlotte, NC 28273

6. Monroe Crossing Mall



Monroe Crossing is a 395,000 sq. foot regional mall, offering a wide variety of well-known specialty shops and dining options in the heart of Monroe, NC.

About East Elementary School



School Information

[East Elementary School](#)

[515 Elizabeth Avenue](#)

[Monroe, NC 28112](#)

Phone: 704-296-3110

Fax: 704-296-3112

Office Hours: 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Monday – Friday

7:00 a.m. School opens for early arrivals and bus students

7:00 a.m. Breakfast begins

7:30 a.m. Breakfast ends

7:30 a.m. Tardy bell/instruction begins (Students who arrive after 7:30 a.m. will be coded as tardy and must report to the office (accompanied by the parent), to get a pass into class)

2:00 p.m. Dismissal begins

Fast Facts

[Traditional Calendar](#)

Mascot: Eagles

Colors: Navy and red

[East Elementary Student Handbook](#)

[ELL Glossary](#)

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